

**Decision: 37 COM 8B.29**

---

**Brief synthesis**

The solitary, often snow-capped Mount Fuji (Fujisan), rising above villages and tree-fringed sea and lakes, has inspired artists and poets and been the object of pilgrimage for centuries. Fujisan is a solitary strato-volcano, around 100 km south-west of Tokyo that rises to 3,776 meters in height. The base of its southern slopes extends to the sea shores of Suruga Bay.

The awe that Fujisan's majestic form and intermittent volcanic activity has inspired was transformed into religious practices that linked Shintoism and Buddhism, people and nature, and symbolic death and re-birth, with worship ascents and descents to and from the summit, formalised in routes and around shrines and lodging houses at the foot of the mountain. And the almost perfect, snow-capped conical form of Fujisan inspired artists in the early 19th century to produce images that transcended cultures, allowed the mountain to be known around the world, and had a profound influence on the development of Western art.

From ancient times, pilgrims carrying a long staff, set off from the compounds of the Sengenjinja shrines at the foot of the mountain to reach the crater at its summit where it was believed that the Shinto deity, Asama no Okami resided. At the summit, they carried out a practice called ohachimeguri (literally, "going around the bowl"), processing around the crater wall. There were two types of pilgrims, those who were led by mountain ascetics, and from the 17th century onwards, those in greater numbers who belonged to Fuji-ko societies that flourished in the prosperous and stable Edo period.

As pilgrimages became more popular from the 18th century onwards, organizations were established to support the pilgrims' needs and routes up the mountain were delineated, huts provided, and shrines and Buddhist facilities built. Curious natural volcanic features at the foot of the mountain, created by lava flowing down after volcanic eruptions, came to be revered as sacred sites, while the lakes and springs were used by pilgrims for cold ablutions, Mizugori, to purify their bodies prior to climbing the mountain. The practice of making a circuit of eight lakes, Hakkaimeguri - including the five lakes included in the Fujigoko (Fuji Five Lakes) - became a ritual among many Fuji-ko adherents. Pilgrims progressed up the mountain through what they recognised as three zones; the grass area around the base, above that the forest area and beyond that the burnt or bald mountain of its summit.

From the 14th century, artists created large numbers of images of Fujisan and between the 17th to the 19th century, its form became a key motif not only in paintings but also in literature, gardens, and other crafts. In particular the wood block prints of Katsushika Hokusai, such as the Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji, had a profound impact on Western art in the 19th century and allowed the form of Fujisan to become widely known as the symbol of 'Oriental' Japan.

The serial property consists of the top zone of the mountain, and spread out around its lower slopes shrines, lodging houses and a group of revered natural phenomena consisting of springs, a waterfall lava tree moulds and a pine tree grove on the sand beach, which together form an exceptional testimony to the religious veneration of Fujisan, and encompass enough of its majestic form to reflect the way its beauty as depicted by artists had such a profound influence on the development of Western art.

**Criterion (iii):** The majestic form of Fujisan as a solitary strato-volcano, coupled with its intermittent volcanic activity, has inspired a tradition of mountain worship from ancient times to the present day. Through worship-ascents of its peaks and pilgrimages to sacred sites around its lower slopes, pilgrims aspired to be imbued with the spiritual powers possessed by the gods and buddhas believed to reside there. These religious associations were linked to a deep adoration of Fujisan that inspired countless works of art depicting what was seen as its perfect form, gratitude for its bounty, and a tradition that emphasised co-existence with the natural environment. The series of sites are an exceptional testimony to a living cultural tradition centred on the veneration of Fujisan and its almost perfect form.

**Criterion (vi):** Images of Fujisan as a solitary strato-volcano, rising above lakes and sea, have been a font of inspiration for poetry, prose and works of art since ancient times. In particular the images of Fujisan in early 19th-century Ukiyo-e prints by Katsushika Hokusai and Utagawa Hiroshige had an outstanding impact on the development of Western art, and have allowed the majestic form of Fujisan, which can still be appreciated, to be known around the world.

### **Integrity**

The series contains all the necessary components needed to express the majesty of Fujisan and its spiritual and artistic associations. However, because of development in the lower part of the mountain, the relationship between pilgrims' routes and supporting shrines and lodging houses cannot readily be appreciated. The serial property currently does not clearly project itself as a whole, nor does it allow a clear understanding of how each of the component sites contributes to the whole in a substantial way. There is a need to strengthen the inter-connectedness between the component sites and to introduce interpretation that allows a more accessible understanding of the value of the whole ensemble and the functions of the various parts in relation to pilgrimages.

In terms of spiritual integrity, the pressure from very large numbers of pilgrims in two summer months, and the infrastructure that supports them in terms of huts, tractor paths to supply the huts and large barriers to protect the paths from falling stones, works against the spiritual atmosphere of the mountain. The Fuji Five Lakes (Fujigoko), and especially the two larger lakes – Lake Yamanakako and Lake Kawaguchiko, face increasing pressure from tourism and development, and the springs and ponds also face threats from low-rise development.

### **Authenticity**

In terms of the ability of the series as a whole to convey its spiritual and aesthetic value, currently this is limited in relation to the way individual sites project their meaning in relation to each other, and to the whole mountain. The component parts need to be better integrated into the whole, with the relationship between shrines, and lodging houses and the pilgrim routes being clearly set out.

In terms of the authenticity of individual sites, the physical attributes relating to the upper routes, shrines and lodging houses are intact. The renewal of shrines on a periodic basis is a living tradition. The Ise Shrine is renewed on a 20-year cycle while some shrines (or parts of some shrines) associated with Fujisan are renewed on a 60-year cycle. This means their authenticity rest on their siting, design, materials and function as well as on the age of their component parts. However the location and setting of some of the component parts, such as between the five lakes, ponds, waterfall and a pine tree grove, is compromised by development that interferes with their inter-visibility.

### **Management and protection requirements**

Various parts of the property have been officially designated as an Important Cultural Property, a Special Place of Scenic Beauty, a Special Natural Monument, a Historic Site, a Place of Scenic Beauty, and a Natural Monument, in addition to it being designated as a National Park. The overall landscape of the summit is protected as part of the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park and this includes the lava tree molds and Lakes Yamanakako and Lake Kawaguchiko. Most component sites, including the ascending routes, shrines

and lakes within the summit, have been given national protection as important cultural properties, historic sites or places of scenic beauty – within the last two years. The Murayama and Fuji Sengen-jinja Shrines and the Oshino Hakkai springs were protected in September 2012.

For the buffer zone protection is provided by the Landscape Act and Guidelines for Land Use Projects (and related legislation). All component parts and the buffer zones are planned to be covered by Landscape Plans around 2016. These provide the framework within which Municipalities undertake development control.

What needs strengthening is how these various measures in practice control the scale and location of buildings that might impact on the sites. In principle they relate to the need for harmonious development (in colour, design, form, height, materials and sometimes scale). However, the strictest controls seem to relate primarily to colour and height. There is a need to control more tightly the scale of buildings, as well as the location of buildings, especially the siting of buildings, including hotels, on the lower flanks of mountains.

The two prefectures, Yamanashi and Shizuoka with relevant municipal governments have established the Fujisan World Cultural Heritage Council to create a comprehensive management system for the property. These bodies also work in close cooperation with the main relevant national agencies that are the Agency for Cultural Affairs, which is the competent authority charged with preserving and managing Japan's cultural heritage properties, the Ministry of the Environment and the Forestry Agency. This Council is also receiving input from an academic committee of experts for the surveying, preservation and management of Fujisan.

The Fujisan Comprehensive Preservation and Management Plan was established in January 2012 to coordinate the actions of all parties, including local residents. The plan lays out not only methods for the preservation, management, maintenance, and utilization of the property overall but also for each individual component site and also sets out the respective roles that the national and local public bodies and other relevant organizations should play. In addition, there are park plans under the Natural Parks Law and forest management plans under the Law on the Administration and Management of the National Forests that provide measures for the management of the visual landscape from important viewpoints.

The property is subject to conflicting needs between access and recreation on the one hand and maintaining spiritual and aesthetic qualities on the other hand. A 'vision' for the property will be adopted by the end of 2014 that will set out approaches to address this necessary fusion and to show how the overall series can be managed in a way that draws together the relationships between the components and stresses their links with the mountain. This vision will then over-arch the way the property is managed as a cultural landscape and inform the revision of the Management Plan by around the end of 2016.

An overall conservation approach is needed for the upper routes and for the associated mountain huts in order to stabilize the paths, manage the erosion caused by visitors and water, and manage delivery of supplies and energy.

The Fujisan World Cultural Heritage Council is planning to complete the development of a Visitor Management Strategy and adopt it by the end of 2014. This is needed as a basis for decisions on carrying capacities for the heavily used upper routes, parking, service buildings and visual clutter, but also on how visitors may perceive the coherence of the sites and their associations. This is particularly crucial for the sites in the lower parts of the mountain where their relationship with the pilgrim routes is unclear. An Interpretation Strategy will be adopted around the end of 2014.

4. Recommends that the State Party operationalize the management system in order to manage the property as an entity and as a cultural landscape with respect to the following:

- a) Put in place an overall vision for the property related to its conflicting needs to offer access and

recreation and to maintain spiritual and aesthetic qualities,

- b) Delineate the pilgrim routes on the lower slopes of the mountain in relation to the shrines and lodging sites and to their links to the upper ascent routes, and consider how these might be perceived and understood,
  - c) Develop a visitor management strategy based on researched carrying capacities for the upper access routes,
  - d) Develop an overall conservation approach for the upper access routes and their associated huts and tractor routes,
  - e) Develop an interpretation strategy that informs how each of the individual sites can be appreciated and understood as part of the overall property and of the overall pilgrimage routes around both the upper and lower slopes of the mountain, in order to guide the development of visitor centres and interpretation at individual sites,
  - f) Strengthen the monitoring indicators to reflect spiritual and aesthetic aspects of the landscape;
5. Requests the State Party to submit a state of conservation report to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2016 in order to provide an update on the progress with the development of an overall vision for the property, a tourism strategy, a conservation approach for the access routes, an Interpretation strategy, a risk management strategy with the overall revision of the management plan to reflect a cultural landscape approach to be examined by the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session in 2016 and encourages the State Party to ask ICOMOS advice on these approaches.